THE ENDLESS LIFE

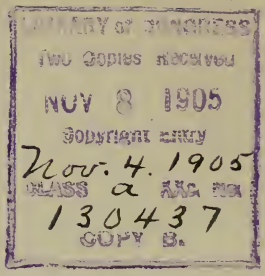
The Ingersoll Lecture, 1905

THE ENDLESS LIFE

BY

SAMUEL McCHORD CROTHERS

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY
The Riverside Press, Cambridge
1905



Published November 1905

THE INGERSOLL LECTURESHIP

Extract from the will of Miss Caroline Haskell Ingersoll, who died in Keene, County of Cheshire, New Hampshire, Jan. 26, 1893.

First. In carrying out the wishes of my late beloved father, George Goldthwait Ingersoll, as declared by him in his last will and testament, I give and bequeath to Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass., where my late father was graduated, and which he always held in love and honor, the sum of Five thousand dollars ($5,000) as a fund for the establishment of a Lectureship on a plan somewhat similar to that of the Dudleian lecture, that is —one lecture to be delivered each year, on any convenient day between the last day of May and the first day of December, on this subject, "the Immortality of Man," said lecture not to form a part of the usual college course, nor to be delivered by any Professor or Tutor as part of his usual routine of instruction, though any such Professor or Tutor may be appointed to such service. The choice of said lecturer is not to be limited to any one religious denomination, nor to any one profession, but may be that of either clergyman or layman, the appointment to take place at least six months before the delivery of said lecture. The above sum to be safely invested and three fourths of the annual interest thereof to be paid to the lecturer for his services and the remaining fourth to be expended in the publishment and gratuitous distribution of the lecture, a copy of which is always to be furnished by the lecturer for such purpose. The same lecture to be named and known as "the Ingersoll lecture on the Immortality of Man."

THE ENDLESS LIFE

IN venturing upon the subject of immortality, it is necessary to rid our minds at once of the conceit of present knowledge and of the expectation that our thought shall be adequate to the reality that beckons us. There are moods in which we are interested only in what we can clearly see and adequately define. With instruments of precision we survey our little field, and fix its boundaries. We tolerate no vagueness, and that which we do not know is that for which we do not care.

Now and then, one finds a mind that seems capable of no other mood. It is satisfied with things as they are,

or, rather, with what it accepts as the same, with things as they seem. It is disturbed by no sense of incongruity between what it has discovered as actual, and what it has conceived as possible and infinitely to be desired. It never flings itself passionately against its limitations, seeking to push them back, and believing that the best is yet to be. The equilibrium between its desires and its attainments is never greatly disturbed. To such a mind only that which can be measured is real.

If we were to accept such a mood as final, we might dismiss the subject of immortality. It has no standing place before such a judgment seat. The faith in immortality is not a field of experience well surveyed and fixed

by metes and bounds. It is rather the sense that there is an unexplored territory that stretches beyond the boundaries that we see. Man is an adventurer who cries, —

I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch wherethro'
Gleams that untravel'd world whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.

The idea of immortality is one of the phases of the thought of infinitude. It is the removal of limits which at first seemed final. It is the assertion that our own lives are infinitely greater than we had thought; that there is something beyond the familiar boundaries of Time.

Now, how do we ever come to a sense of the infinite? It is not by

way of abstraction. Having discovered a finite reality, we do not turn away from it, and, in a spirit of willful contradiction, assert the existence of the infinite. No! We follow a finite thing. We seek to grasp it, to understand it in all its relations and antecedents. We follow it till suddenly we get beyond our depth. To come to that experience, we have only to follow anything far enough.

This experience of the unfathomable depths of being may be long delayed. Those who take care to keep well within bounds are not likely to be disturbed by the sense of the boundless. The average man does not live habitually in the awed consciousness that he is in an infinite universe. He is dealing, as he thinks,

with finite realities. He prides himself on his ability to see all around a subject and to exhaust its possibilities. He talks glibly of the beginning and the end of things. He has the ability so to concentrate his mind upon a single phase of the actual as to shut out all else. His mind is preoccupied by a multitude of petty cares.

And yet, for all that, he *does* live in the presence of infinite reality; and now and then the fogs are brushed aside, and he becomes conscious of where he is.

He had used his mind merely as an instrument for private gain. He had sharpened his wits as he would sharpen any other tools. They had seemed impenetrable to ideas unconnected with self-seeking. And yet,

forced to meditation, the mind of this self-seeker becomes a mirror of the universal mysteries, — an imperfect mirror, indeed: the images are blurred and vague, but they are vast and significant. The things which once seemed final are not final; that which he thought he understood is past all understanding. His mind is, instead of being merely an instrument of precision, —

> the unimaginable lodge
> For solitary thinkings, such as dodge
> Conception to the very bourne of heaven,
> Then leave the naked brain.

This experience comes whenever he allows himself leisure to turn from his immediate occupation, and look at the horizon. What lies beyond? Words which seemed definitions become mere

suggestions when he tries to understand them. Time, Space, Force, — these had seemed measurable, but to his awakened thought they open up infinite vistas.

It had seemed a commonplace thing to him to live in the present, and he had prided himself on holding to "one world at a time." But what is it to live in Time? What is this "Now" that seems so substantial? As he frames the word, that present has become past, — that moment has been lost in the abyss of time. It is as irrecoverable as the moment when Herod was king in Judea.

In attempting to grasp a single moment, to hold it till he can discover what it is, he finds himself in an unfathomable deep. He is in the midst

of an eternal succession, — that which was and is and is to be. He tries to think what was there before the first moment, — and he can only frame the thought of the moment before the first. What shall be after the last moment? — it must be the moment after the last. And then the first and last become words without meaning, and he cries, " End there is none ; lo, also there is no beginning."

He surveys his field and fixes his boundaries. He is satisfied with his finite possessions, this bit of space enclosed against all trespassers. Then in the night he looks up, and there is no enclosure. Upon his scanty acres the patient stars look down, — they are the same lights the first tribes of men saw when they looked up, half fright-

ened, and wondered at the infinitude above. The eye sees so far into that infinitude of space that the imagination cannot follow, — and still the cold reason declares that it is not the end.

The man exerts his strength. He walks, runs, lifts, pushes. Each exertion is a revelation. At last he learns to use the forces outside himself. He exults over his discoveries, and then is overwhelmed, for he has come upon an energy which is without bounds. It moves from everlasting to everlasting. He cannot account for it, he cannot comprehend it, but it is here.

All these discoveries of infinitude come about very simply and inevitably. There is an attempt to do a definite thing; it turns out to be immeasurably greater than it seemed.

The Hebrew sage describes the process. "He maketh the understanding to abound like Euphrates, and as Jordan in the time of harvest; the first man knew her not perfectly; no more shall the last find her out. For her thoughts are more than the sea, and her counsels profounder than the great deep." He tells us how he became conscious of these profounder depths. "I said, I will water my best garden; and will water abundantly my garden bed; and lo, my brook became a river, and my river became a sea."

Now, how does this kind of experience affect our thought of the fixed boundaries of life? Awed by the infinitudes of Time and Space and Power, the man turns back upon himself. It is at first with a sense of his own insig-

nificance and littleness. What am I? he asks. A finite creature set down in the midst of immensity, a creature with a definite beginning and end, I have a glimpse of an eternity that I do not share. My life is only

A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars of sand
Left on the shore; that hears all night
The plunging seas draw backward from the land
Their moon-led waters white.

What am I? A mark of interrogation. But there is no answer. He contrasts the little world within with the great world without. Within he finds thought, feeling, hope, love, purpose, longing for the perfect. Without there is time, space, matter, unconscious force. Here is the contrast between the finite and the infinite, the transient and the permanent.

It is the world within, he says, that is the finite, the accidental, the transitory; the world without is the eternal and the infinite. Unconscious force is creative; it has within itself infinite potency; it has the promise of permanency. Conscious force — that force which he feels within himself — is but a chance product of this eternal energy, signifying nothing. For a moment it emerges, and then is gone forever.

Is this the whole story? The creature whose existence is a note of interrogation must ask questions. And he begins with "obstinate questionings of sense and outward things." Are these outward things the final realities, or is there something that transcends? He awakens in a strange land, shut in on every side by alien

powers, but he awakens to passionate longing for home. He feels that he is kin to something greater than himself. At last the impulse becomes irresistible, and he cries, "I will arise and go unto my Father."

Then begins the ideal life. It is a spiritual quest, the spirit of man seeking that which shall satisfy it. It is the struggle for existence lifted to a higher level. It is the struggle to find that which shall sustain what is most distinctly human, — to find food for reason, and conscience, and the finer affections. It is a struggle against the limitations which at first seemed to shut out all hope.

At first the aspiring soul seems like "a wild thing taken in a trap, which sees the trapper coming through the

wood;" the struggle seems futile, and yet it never ceases. Here and there it seeks a way of escape. After a while we begin to be conscious that the struggle, which began so blindly, is not unrelated to the advancing order of the universe. The soul's struggle to free itself is the condition of efficiency. The human strife is not a rebellion against eternal law, it is the coöperation with an eternal power. The soul is not entrapped, but harnessed to fulfill a mighty task.

The most significant thing in spiritual evolution is that we have a creature actually existing who has become dissatisfied with his old environment and has deliberately projected himself into a new environment. His past and his present are not enough for him. He

consciously lays hold upon the future. Browning describes what has taken place: —

> In man's self arise
> August anticipations, symbols, types,
> Of a dim splendour ever on before,
> In that eternal circle life pursues.
> For men begin to pass their nature's bound
> And find new hopes and cares, which fast supplant
> Their proper joys and griefs; and outgrow all
> The narrow creeds of right and wrong, which fade
> Before the unmeasured thirst for good; while peace
> Rises within them ever more and more.
> Such men are even now upon the earth.

Here we have our subject in its concrete reality. We do not propose a question about a future life unrelated to this. We are confronted by a kind of life already existing, the life of men

who are even now upon the earth. It is characteristic of such lives that they overflow the narrow bounds of sense. They are full of august anticipations, they are thrilled by great hopes, they are impelled by an unmeasured thirst for good. Do not such lives compel us to revise ideas derived altogether from a study of the world from which they have emerged, and over which they have triumphed?

They have been watering their gardens of love and hope and courage; may it not be that they have found the slender rill becoming a river and a sea? May there not be an infinitude of spiritual life matching the infinitude of physical energy?

In discussing the question of immortality, one may attempt to trace

its historic origins, in the mind of the primitive man. One may, as the result of contemporary observation, attempt to set forth the attitude of the average modern man. In the one case we are confused by a jungle growth of superstition, in the other case we may find ourselves in an arid region of indifference. Nor are we better off when we consult some man of highly specialized intelligence.

There are men who have studied carefully some particular phase of life, whose attention has hardly been turned to its spiritual possibilities or achievements. They are like persons who have known some great man when he was an unformed boy. They know what he came from, and they think they know him. But they never treat

his later attainments seriously. Those who know most about the origins are not always fitted to speak most wisely about destiny. They are too likely to have attention fastened upon some arrested development, and to treat it as if it were final.

There are minds with great powers of analysis which are devitalized and dehumanized. Emerson tells how such an intelligence disappoints us: —

Philosophers are lined with eyes within,
And, being so, the sage unmakes the man.
In love, he cannot therefore cease his trade;
Scarce the first blush has overspread his cheek,
He feels it, introverts his learned eye
To catch the unconscious heart in the very act.
His mother died, — the only friend he had, —
Some tears escaped, but his philosophy
Couched like a cat sat watching close behind
And throttled all his passion.

What we most desire to know is the attitude of those whose human passion has been throttled neither by superstition, nor by worldly preoccupation, nor by too narrow intellectual interests. We desire the witness of the broadly, sanely, sensitively human. We are asking the world-old question about "the fate of the man-child, the meaning of man." And we ask, "What does the man himself, when he is at his best, think about it? What is the attitude of the man most man, with tenderest human needs?"

What is the attitude of the ethical idealist, that is to say, the man who is inspired by the passion for human perfection, towards immortality?

Let us hasten to say that the first effect of sound ethical development is

to quiet the impatient questioning, and to rebuke many of the insistent demands. The question of the duration of life is not in the foreground, — it waits on the prior question of the quality of life. There is a mere greed of existence which is pronounced unworthy, as if when one had partaken of a feast, he refused to give way to others, claiming as of right that which had been granted him by grace. The well-disciplined soul does not claim immortality as a reward for services done here. Duty is an obligation to be fulfilled, it does not involve an obligation toward us. Having done our part, we may not linger asking for further payment. Nor can we childishly refuse to recognize the sanction of moral law here, or the

possibilities of noble living, until we are assured of continued existence. The ethical idealist takes the nobler alternative: —

Is there no other life, pitch this one high.

In saying this we proclaim our moral independence. Allegiance to ideal righteousness is not contingent on what may or may not happen to us. Its values are intrinsic, — something we have already found real and commanding. We live, and we are resolved, come what may, to make our lives worthy. We will fill them full of thought, of generous purpose, of human love, of divine aspiration. Though we may be but creatures of a day, in that day we will yield ourselves to the perfect whole. Life for us shall be at its maximum and not

at its minimum. How much of good may come to us we may not know beforehand; but the good that does come to us, that we will hold fast. And the good that escapes us, what of that? "The fluent image of the unstable best" is ours also. Ours, if not to hold, then ours to follow after. To be an idealist is to be one who takes counsel of his courage rather than his fears. He is one who, in every enterprise, is

> Still nursing the unconquerable hope,
> Still clutching the inviolable shade.

For things still unattained he gives and hazards all he has. As he will not make his reason blind, neither will he allow his heart to grow cold nor his ideals to be dimmed.

All this is dependent on no speculation. It is a present experience. This is the kind of life which he has deliberately chosen, and which seems to him good. It is not a life of dull acquiescence in established conditions, — it is a life of creative activity. He is accustomed to project his thought into the future and then plunge forward to regain it. It is now no mere thought, but a deed. He has done this again and again. Ideals are to him no empty dreams; they are to be realized in action.

His worship of ideal perfection has in it exultation, for the beautiful vision is to him a prophecy of the day of its fulfillment. The beauty now seen afar marks the coming of a new power.

For 't is the eternal law
That first in beauty should be first in might.

Love is to him no sad mourner weeping unavailing tears, — it is a great world-power. What he recognizes and reveres is love militant and triumphant: —

Love, from its awful throne of patient power
In the wise heart.

To pitch this life high, does it not mean to develop all the nobler powers and trust them to the uttermost? It means, —

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy Power which seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates.

Thus the man has lived. At last the moment comes when life strikes

hard on death. For that moment, too, comes the word, "Pitch this one high." That means that he is to summon his best, that he is to keep on as aforetime with his face toward the light, — he is to keep on, — hoping, loving, daring, aspiring.

And then comes the sudden silence, and to us who watch the brave ongoing all things seem possible. All things seem possible save that there should be no path for these patient feet.

The total impression made upon us by the noblest human life is not that of a completed work. It is not Death and the Statue, — Death putting the finishing touch to a masterpiece. It is Death and the Sculptor. The Sculptor's eyes are flashing with creative

genius, his power is yet unexhausted, his willing hand is outstretched. Between the workman and his work Death intervenes. So far and no farther, he says: forever and forever the work must remain incomplete.

A work abruptly broken off. A marvelous dawn ending in sudden eclipse; a glorious promise unfulfilled. Is this all?

Here we have the interest of ideal ethics in continued life. We are told that disinterested virtue makes a man indifferent to his own existence. He must be willing to sacrifice himself for the good cause. Yes, but what is the good cause?

The good cause is the creation of a spiritual kingdom. It is the glad co-operation of great souls. It is furthered

not by suicide, but by service. The demand is for larger, wiser, more patient service. Call it self-sacrifice if you will; that means not self-destruction, but the offering of one's self as a necessary power to do a work. And there must be a self to offer, — and the larger and fuller the self the better. This is the word of disinterested devotion, "Here am I, send me."

A hundred times the good man has said that. He has gone forth not knowing whither he went. It is not the weakness of selfishness, it is the soldierly spirit, that makes him at the utmost verge of the earthly life long for new opportunity. He asks for no reward for things done, only the wages of going on. Still he cries with unabated ardor, "Here am I, send me."

In all this there is not the egotistic clinging to a personal possession, there is rather the devotion to spiritual realities. The primary assertion is that of the eternal values, there is a recognition of that inner treasure which the Hebrew sages called wisdom. "The true beginning of her is the desire of discipline, and the desire of discipline is love of her, and love of her is observance of her laws, and to give heed to her laws compriseth incorruption, and incorruption bringeth near to God. In kinship to wisdom is immortality and in her friendship is good delight."

What are the things which most bear the impress of the Eternal, — which seem most truly to mirror the power of God? Wisdom, love, duty, joyous and free service.

But what do these words mean? They express personal qualities, they are attributes of a living being. They are doubtless potentialities of the universe, bound up in its necessary causation, but to us they have been revealed in human consciousness.

For unnumbered ages atoms have been moved about by forces as indestructible as themselves. They have floated in mists of fire, they have been gathered into molten billows, they have been whirled into worlds and systems of worlds, they have risen in clouds, they have fallen in rain, they have risen again in grass-blades and flowers and trees. They have been organized into creatures that breathe and creep and walk and fly, and then return again into dust.

All this is wonderful, and yet thus far the Universe seems to be all of one piece. In all this change of form there is no destruction of values, for the whole receives the parts back again into itself. There is no more sense of loss in the dissolution than in the evolution; it is merely change of form, the substance remains the same. Physical force remains physical force, atoms remain atoms through all the metamorphosis. There is thus far no room for rebellion against the hurrying fate. "Dust to dust," — there is no repining against that law, as long as the dust *is* dust, and nothing more.

But the time comes when there is something more. Out of the dust there emerges a creature whose existence in the material world is nothing

short of a miracle. Connect him as closely as you may with all that went before, and yet the amazing fact remains that his being carries him into another sphere which transcends the familiar round of physical causation. His language is strange in this world of law. Is it only a chance concourse of atoms, organized into a brain, as yesterday they may have been organized into the weeds of the roadside, from which comes the confident voice: I love, I hope, I worship eternal beauty, I offer myself in obedience to a perfect law of righteousness, I gladly suffer that others may be saved, I resist the threatening evil that I see, I choose not the easy way, but the difficult way, my will shall not yield to circumstance, but only to a higher will.

Molecules, however organized, do not naturally thus utter themselves. Chemical reactions are not thus expressed. There are no equivalents for this new power in the mechanical forces.

Are we not compelled to say, "We are in the presence of a new and higher kind of energy. The stupendous fact is the existence of a living will. Out of a universe of purposeless force there comes a purposeful will devoted to absolute good." Can that be true? Our instinct for orderly causation does not allow the statement to pass unchallenged. A universe out of which there emerges a living will cannot be purposeless. In the light of the living will the history of the Past must be written, and this newly revealed force

throws a penetrating light into the future. Here is something that has an eternal meaning: —

> O living will that shalt endure
> When all that seems shall suffer shock.

Here is the first glimpse of infinitude that really satisfies. The infinitudes of Time and Space and Physical Force awe us at first, and then tire us. It is because they are infinite in extent, but not infinite in value. We very quickly exhaust their meaning, and then there is the sense of monotonous repetition. It is the sense that comes when we stand upon the summit of a mountain that looks down upon numberless lesser heights. At first there is the exhilaration of achievement and the widened horizons. But there is nothing any

longer to beckon us; the rugged earth is flattened beneath us into a featureless expanse. We tire of looking down.

But the glimpse of spiritual infinitude is like the glimpse of mountains towering above us, range upon range, peak above peak. Looking up we see no end, we are inspired by the immensities. There is in us the unstilled desire for that which lies beyond. Did ever lover tire of the thought of love eternal, the vaster passion gathering all unto itself, guarding all and keeping all? The truth-lover tires of the accumulation of unrelated facts, but he does not tire of Truth, Truth vitalized and humanized. Divine ideas ever find us young and ever keep us so. "No man," said Victor Hugo,

"can make an end with his conscience;" and we may add, no man with an awakened conscience wishes to make an end. "The path of the just is as a shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

One theme there is that is inexhaustible: that is the development of a soul. Here is a work of creation that might go on forever, and forever absorb our interest.

Does it not all come back to this one realization of "the abysmal deeps of personality"? Those to whom personality is suggestive of limitation may hesitate to speak either of a personal God or of the continuance of the personal life of man. The conscious personality seems to them only a part of an unconscious whole. They think

of it as an insignificant part. Its separate existence is but temporary, and then it is absorbed again into that out of which it emerged.

Some little talk of Me and Thee
There was, and then no more of Thee and Me.

What does this talk of Thee and Me signify? Is it only the material Universe talking in its sleep?

There have always been those to whom this is wildly incredible. The talk of Thee and Me is not to be lightly dismissed. Something out of the Universe speaks. At first it is but a cry out of the dark, then the speech becomes more coherent. The talk of Thee and Me becomes the talk of relations of justice, mercy, and love. It reveals a universal order. It reaches into prayer and worship. The lan-

guage is still personal: "I in thee, thou in me." It reveals an all-comprehensive unity.

This is that of which — when the clouds are off our souls — we dare assert immortality. The ground of our confidence is the discovery we have made.

Know, man hath all that Nature hath but more,
And in that *more* lie all his hopes of good.

It is with the fate of that something more that we are concerned.

Or would it not be truer to say that when we once are deeply persuaded that there is something more, and that that something more is in its nature spiritual, we cease to be anxiously concerned about its fate. Its essential nature is the best argument for its perpetuity. There is a serene mood

that is not impatient for further proof. It accepts

> With faith that comes of self-control,
> The truths that never can be proved
> Until we close with all we loved,
> And all we flow from, soul in soul.

This we may say: that the faith that comes of self-control rests not on the weakness, but on the strength, of human nature. It is the faith not of mere visionaries, but of those who have learned by doing. It is a faith that has

> great allies;
> Its friends are exultations, agonies,
> And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

It is the faith of multitudes who, coming out of great tribulation, break forth at last into victorious song.

It is a faith that lies deep in the

heart of many a man who dares make no dogmatic assertion, like those disciples of whom it was once written, "They yet believed not, for joy, and wondered." This wondering joy in life inspires a deeper confidence than many a labored argument.

It is a faith that is born anew in unselfish friendship. Many a man who would not claim immortality for himself, yet reverently recognizes in another greater than himself "the power of an endless life." I have seen, he says, a life that is to me a revelation. I cannot doubt but that all is well with him, —

> That friend of mine who lives in God.

This above all, — it is a faith which we all share when we are brought into the presence of a supremely great soul.

Then we know that there is an infinitude of love and wisdom that matches the infinitudes of space.

Companioned by the great souls of the world, we may share their courageous joy in the great adventure: —

Sail forth — steer for the deep waters only,
Reckless O soul exploring, I with thee and thou with me.
For we are bound where mariner has not yet dared go,
And we will risk the ship, ourselves, and all.

But granting that this attitude of hopeful expectancy has the support of all that is best within us, the question comes, "Why has not the evidence for continued life been made so clear and strong that there could be no longer any possibility of doubt? If

our hope rests ultimately on the eternal goodness, why has not that eternal goodness allayed our anxieties? Should we not expect a revelation so definite that in all these generations it should have given peace to those 'who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage'? Faith in immortality is in its last analysis faith in God, 'in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life.' Why is not this knowledge clearer?"

So Browning's "Cleon" meditated. To him the lack of a definite revelation seemed equivalent to the denial of the human faith.

> I dare at times imagine to my need
> Some future state revealed to us by Zeus.
> Unlimited in capability
> For joy, as this is in-desire for joy,

To seek which, the joy-hunger forces us:
That, stung by straitness of our life, made strait
On purpose to make sweet the life at large —
Freed by the throbbing impulse we call death,
We burst there as the worm into the fly,
Who, while a worm still, wants his wings. But, no!
Zeus has not yet revealed it; and, alas!
He must have done so — were it possible!

The instinct is a true one which insists that immortality belongs to the sphere of "revealed religion." Following this instinct religious men have rested everything not on reasoning but on miracle. Once upon a time, they say, God graciously drew aside the veil which had hidden the future and made known the glorious fact of continued existence. Those to whom this favor was given had full assurance, and we believing in their testimony can share their confidence.

For those who are able to receive such evidence as conclusive, immortality is accepted with the same kind of assurance that belongs to any ascertained fact. But there are those to whom this frame of mind is an impossibility. Historic evidence can never be to them sufficient. It is a chain of testimony that can never be stronger than its weakest link. If the evidence for immortality rests upon a special miracle, that miracle must be performed in their presence and under conditions which allow opportunity for most careful investigation.

And yet it is possible for such persons to believe in a divine revelation. Indeed, some of them believe in nothing else. The old antithesis between Natural and Revealed Religion is cast

aside. We cannot say, Some things necessary to our salvation God graciously revealed to us, and other things He left us to find out for ourselves. We rather say: There is an eternal revelation of Truth. It is not arbitrary or spasmodic. It is never premature. It comes constantly "answering unto man's endeavor." Its organ is personal consciousness.

A stone lies on the ground. The sun shines upon it, the rains falls, the eternal sky is above it, but it knows nothing and can know nothing of all this. Men come and take it out of its place, they carve it into forms of beauty, they place it in a temple, they bow down before it and worship it. But all this is unrevealed.

A child is born. It, too, is sur-

rounded by realities which are at first veiled from it. It knows neither itself nor the world into which it has come. But immediately the process of unveiling begins. At first everything is without form and void, but as the days go by, outlines more and more definite appear. The nebulous splendor of the light is distinguished from the darkness, and there is the day and the night. A friendly face is recognized, and there is the first apprehension of the mystery of love. With the swift years the revealing goes on. Practical wisdom is revealed through labor. The knowledge of natural law comes through experiment. The moral law is revealed to the growing conscience. Sympathy comes with the experience of sorrow. Knowledge

comes only as the mind has been prepared to receive it. It cannot come otherwise. First there is the seeking, then by slow degrees the finding, and the seeking itself is an essential part of the revelation. It is an educative process, and not a magical transformation scene. Its purpose is not to relieve our anxieties but to strengthen and purify our natures.

God may not have revealed eternal life through some miracle which makes doubt impossible. Neither has He so revealed the laws of health, or the motions of the planets, or the fundamental principles of art, or the ideals of true statesmanship. Yet all these things are being revealed through the development of humanity. It is a marvelous series of discoveries.

The hidden things are not those which are least important nor those which are in their nature most obscure. Shelley writes of "a poet hidden in the light of thought." There are truths, sublimely simple, hidden in the light rather than in the darkness. They await the seeing eye and the understanding heart. They exist and influence us even while we are unconscious of them. We may have premonitions of them long before we are able to perceive them clearly.

We might conceive that anything so essential as the laws of health should have been revealed fully at the beginning of human history. Nothing is so desirable as health of the body. It is not an artificial condition, but a life according to nature.

And yet no knowledge has been longer delayed. The simplest truths have slowly come into the field of human consciousness. Even those who have most eagerly sought for health have had to learn through their own failures. Such universally diffused blessings as fresh air and sunshine have been overlooked, and help has been sought in all sorts of magic. The pioneers of medicine have had to cut their way through as dense a jungle of superstition as that which has obstructed the way of the theologians. One experiment after another had been tried. The simple and the natural methods are the last to be appreciated, so slow is the revealing of truth.

Back of all the effort that is being

made to enlarge the domain of knowledge, there is one vitalizing faith. It is the faith that the healthy life is possible. The vast domain of the unknown is no longer full of spectres frightening those who peer into its sullen depths. It is rather the goal of eager explorers who plunge into it with a confidence born of past experience. They have no doubt but that each new discovery will teach us how to live more wholesomely.

That word "wholesome" is the key to it all. Health is wholesomeness, — it is life in its entirety and fullness. Danger lurks in that which is partial and fragmentary. Timidity shuts the door against its best friends. It is afraid of the helping powers. It breathes the close air, it shuts out the

sun, it saves itself from exertion, and then wonders why it is ill. It is ill because it does not gladly welcome the good. It is the universal that is the antiseptic.

This fundamental conception of the friendliness of the whole belongs to all ideal effort. It is the doctrine of "saving health." The three great words "health," "wholesomeness," and "holiness" are from the same root. Their meaning is expressed in the great word of morals, "integrity." A strong confidence in the integrity of the universe and in the integrity of the best personality has been the slow growth of experience. It is the whole man in the presence of the whole of his environment, — the physical man responding to his physical environ-

ment, the spiritual man responding to his spiritual environment.

Jeremy Taylor wrote of "Holy Living and Holy Dying." The two cannot be separated. When one comes to die the moral habits of a lifetime are not changed. There must be a firm integrity, a confidence born of the health of the spirit.

> Why art thou cast down, O my Soul?
> And why art thou disquieted within me?
> Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him
> Who is the health of my countenance and my God.

There is a faith in immortal life which has characterized visionaries. There is an ecstatic confidence of those whose souls have been filled with a sudden glory. But more convincing to most of us is the sober

confidence of the simple man who stands in his integrity undaunted by death. He sees no miraculous visions, but he is steadied by his experience, and he takes for granted that he is going on. Such a wholesome spirit appeals alike to the Stoic and to the Christian. Perhaps it was never more simply expressed than in "The Pilgrim's Progress."

When they came to the river there were those whose experiences were characteristic simply of evangelical piety. But among them was one, Mr. Honest by name, who was simply and soundly human.

"Then it came to pass a while after, that there was a Post in the town that inquired for Mr. Honest. So he came to the house where he was, and deliv-

ered to his hands these lines: 'Thou art commanded to be ready against this day seven-night, to present thyself before thy Lord at his Father's house. And for a token that my message is true, all the daughters of music shall be brought low.' Then Mr. Honest called for his friends and said unto them, 'I die but shall make no will. As for my honesty, it shall go with me; let him that comes after be told of this.'

"When the day that he was to be gone was come, he addressed himself to go over the river. Now the river at that time overflowed its banks in some places; but Mr. Honest in his lifetime had spoken to one Good-Conscience to meet him there, the which he also did, and lent him his hand and

so helped him over. The last words of Mr. Honest were 'Grace reigns.' So he left the world."

Our doubts and fears vanish when we see Mr. Honest standing by the river's brink talking with happy earnestness with his friend Good-Conscience. They talk of the good they have experienced and of the greater good they still are seeking—and one is as real to them as the other.

Those who share that faith recognize, in all humility, their own limitations; but they recognize a power that transcends these limitations. It has manifested itself in the simplest lives. It has given to them a meaning that is inexhaustible. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall

be." Conscious of the divine quality of the present life, one can afford to wait for the things which do not yet appear.

The Riverside Press
Electrotyped and printed by H. O. Houghton & Co.
Cambridge, Mass., U. S. A.